

Press release: Environmental farming scheme given green light

The Environment Secretary has today announced that the Payment by Results (PBR) project will be the first agri-environment scheme directly funded by the UK.

In future, all the funding for the Payment by Results (PBR) pilot will come from Defra, with a £540,000 boost announced today to pay farmers according to the environmental outcomes they achieve over the next two years.

The project is paying participating farmers in two areas – Norfolk and Suffolk in the East of England and Wensleydale in Yorkshire – for work that is specifically tailored to the environmental needs of their area. For example, in Norfolk and Suffolk farmers are benefitting from planting nectar plots for bees and other pollinators, while those in Wensleydale are focused on managing species-rich meadows.

Today's announcement follows the government's [public consultation](#) on future farming policy which set out plans to move towards a system where farmers are paid according to the public goods they provide. As we leave the EU, there will be further trialling work to reach a model where profitable farm businesses and environmental land management can co-exist and complement one another.

Secretary of State for Defra, Michael Gove, said:

Under the CAP, agri-environment schemes have been overly bureaucratic and inflexible. This has impeded innovation for farmers who are passionate about the environment and want to see real change.

The Payment by Results pilot marks a shift in how we think about rewarding farmers for their work. This approach signals how we see the future of farm payments, where farmers deliver public goods for the environment which we all enjoy.

I am delighted to extend this scheme and look forward to seeing further evidence of its success as we plan for our future outside the EU.

The PBR project had been due to conclude at the end of this year, but Defra's new funding will enable participating farmers to deliver environmental benefits for an additional two years.

The trial is focused on providing training and guidance for farmers so they are empowered to create their own management plan for their land, and feel more knowledgeable about what they want to achieve, and why. This flexibility

has meant participants have become more engaged in the wildlife they want to see on their land and think more creatively about how to achieve these results.

In Wensleydale, the PBR pilot is delivered by Natural England in partnership with the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority. It has proved popular with participating sheep and cattle farmers managing grassland in the area, who have been rewarded for producing habitat suitable for breeding waders, or for managing species-rich meadows.

Arable farmers in Norfolk and Suffolk have been paid for their management of plots that provide winter food for farmland birds during the “hungry gap” when natural sources of seed food have been depleted. They have also planted and maintained flower-rich foraging habitat for pollinators, protecting this hugely important part of the ecosystem.

Chairman of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, Carl Lis, said:

I am delighted that the Government has funded an extension and expansion of the Wensleydale payment by results pilot scheme. The pilot scheme has been a hit with farmers because it has been designed and delivered locally – and because it puts the farmer back in control of how the land is managed, rather than having to follow very detailed and rigid prescriptions.

With support from our farm team advisers, and the Natural England Project Manager, the 19 farmers in the scheme have produced some excellent environmental results in a short time. They have received payments for making their pastures into good habitat for wading birds, or for restoring and conserving species-rich hay meadows – which are no doubt the jewel in the crown of the Yorkshire Dales National Park’s farmed landscape. The better the environmental results, the more they get paid.

Press release: UK Government announces Edinburgh Fringe funding to promote new talent on global stage

- £100,000 grant to improve digital resources for artists and help market emerging acts
- Funding will help Fringe identify new talent and promote them nationally

and internationally

The UK Government will provide £100,000 to this year's Edinburgh Festival Fringe to help it deliver a step change in how it showcases emerging artistic talent to the world, Culture Secretary Jeremy Wright announced today.

The grant comes on the eve of this year's festival that will run until 27 August.

The funding will be used to:

1. Invest in technology and digital resources for artists, including a streamlined accreditation and ticket request system; develop the edfringe.com website, and help create an Arts Industry app to provide centralised scheduling and ticketing information for artists and visitors.
2. Market and promote acts performing at the Fringe across the UK, particularly in areas currently underrepresented at the festival and create more networking opportunities for UK acts.
3. Help artists extend the lifespan of Fringe productions by recruiting arts industry brokers to help take shows across the UK and overseas.
4. Support the opening of the 'Fringe Home' – a year-round space for arts businesses and events in Edinburgh.

The plans firmly meet the UK Government's commitment to promote Britain on the global stage, and boost the digital capability of cultural organisations across the country.

Jeremy Wright, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, said:

The Edinburgh Festival Fringe is an annual showcase of creativity and a global marketplace for emerging talent.

It has launched the careers of some of the UK's finest writers and performers and we want to ensure it continues to go from strength to strength, helping to break new acts here and across the globe.

This funding will help the Fringe increase its digital capability, making it even easier for visitors to this world-class event to enjoy everything it has to offer.

Since its launch in 1947, the Fringe has become the largest arts market in the world, with a rich history of discovering new talent – including writers, actors, directors, producers, programmers, designers and technicians who have gone on to fuel the UK's creative industries.

In 2017, it was home to almost 3,400 shows, from 62 countries, with approximately 75% of artists and shows from the UK. It is expected to attract a similar number this year.

Shona McCarthy, Chief Executive of Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society, said:

Over the past 71 years, the Fringe has developed into one of the world's leading performing arts marketplaces, a vital springboard for artists' professional development, collaboration and co-commission.

Today's announcement from the UK Government recognises the transformational power of the Fringe in making and shaping careers in the arts, both here in the UK and all over the world.

Thanks to the UK Government's support, we will be able to identify the very best in emerging talent on the Fringe and showcase it on the global stage, ensuring the Fringe (and by extension, Scotland and the UK) remains at the forefront of the global arts landscape.

Scottish Secretary David Mundell said:

The Edinburgh Festival Fringe is the most amazing and diverse creative event in the world. It attracts hundreds of thousands of tourists and provides a huge economic boost to Scotland.

We want to support the creativity at the heart of this extraordinary cultural celebration. That's why the UK Government is investing £100,000 to help the Fringe grow and showcase Scotland to the world.

The announcement comes ahead of the Edinburgh International Culture Summit, where the world's Culture Ministers will gather in the Scottish Parliament to debate the importance of culture, alongside a range of international speakers. The summit will take place between 22 and 24 August, and is co-hosted by the UK and Scottish governments.

For more information please call the DCMS press office: 02072112210

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[News story: UK Armed Forces on high alert for hurricane season](#)

British residents were killed, homes were destroyed and infrastructure was decimated when Irma and Maria, two of the most powerful hurricanes for decades, smashed through the region back-to-back in September 2017.

Mark Lancaster visited Barbados, Antigua and Montserrat this week to reassure locals that the Ministry of Defence is supporting other Government departments to ensure that similar devastation is not repeated.

Armed Forces Minister Mark Lancaster said:

No matter what the elements throw at our Overseas Territories this year, we will be there to help them every step of the way throughout 2018 and beyond. We may not be able to prevent natural disasters from occurring, but our world-class military have been planning meticulously to ensure lives are protected and damage is kept to a minimum.

Our citizens in the Caribbean have already shown incredible resilience over the last year and we are determined that when this difficult period is over their local facilities are in a better state than they were before.

Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) Mounts Bay will act as the hub of the UK's response, and the minister was able to see a demonstration of her amphibious capabilities while in Montserrat.

Fleet Auxiliary vessel MOUNTS BAY and her crew conducting a Humanitarian Relief and Disaster Relief (HADR) Exercise in Montserrat. Crown copyright.

As well as being able to carry vital aid and equipment, RFA Mounts Bay also has the latest Royal Navy Wildcat helicopter on board to provide aerial support – this will be the first time it has operated in the Caribbean. There is also a medical facility on board, with 10 patient beds for anyone who suffers serious injuries or illness.

The visit also provided an opportunity for Mr Lancaster to speak to island governors and residents about their needs as they continue to recover from last year's hurricanes.

As well as preparing for this year, RFA Mounts Bay has been in the region since Irma struck and will remain there until 2020 to help restore the islands to normal.

A Wildcat helicopter takes off from RFA Mounts Bay during the Humanitarian Relief and Disaster Relief (HADR) Exercise. Crown copyright.

The Government has already committed £142million to support the recovery effort in the affected territories, as well as £300million of UK loan guarantees.

Foreign & Commonwealth Office minister Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon is currently visiting the British Virgin Islands, which suffered extensive damage, as the Government continues its preparations for 2018.

[News story: Accelerator One to Ones: Vehicle Checkpoint Screening Competition](#)

DASA will be hosting one to one meetings across two days, 7 and 8 August 2018, for organisations to discuss the new Vehicle Checkpoint Screening competition.

The competition is part of a wider range of activities being carried out by the Future Aviation Security Solutions (FASS) programme, which is a joint Department for Transport and Home Office initiative. The FASS programme is investing £25.5 million over a 5 year period to promote innovation to improve aviation security.

Further information about the competition can be found in the [Vehicle Checkpoint Screening competition summary document](#), where you will find links to register for a one to one slot.